

Application No. 10/617,041
Amendment Dated May 26, 2006
Reply to Office Action of February 28, 2006

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS:

Claims 1 – 6 and 8 - 56 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 20, 29, 43 and 49 being independent. Claim 49 is currently amended. No new matter is added.

Applicant has carefully considered the contents of the Office Action and respectfully requests reconsideration and reexamination of the subject application in view of the explanations noted below.

Claim Objections

Claim 49 is objected to for an informality, particularly that the recitation of a push-in wiring “connector” lacks proper antecedent basis. Claim 49 is amended to change the push-in wiring “connector” recitation to push-in wiring “terminal,” which has proper antecedent basis. Therefore, the objection to claim 49 should be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 10, 14 – 20, 24 – 36, 38 – 40, 43 – 44 and 46 – 53 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,639,841 to Salestrom (the Salestrom ‘841 patent) in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,713,668 to Gibilisco (the Gibilisco ‘668 patent). Claims 2 – 6, 8, 9, 11 – 13, 21 – 23, 37, 41, 42, 45 and 54 - 56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Salestrom ‘841 patent in view of Hatch (non-patent literature).

Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection, since the Salestrom ‘841 and Gibilisco ‘668 patents and the Hatch non-patent literature clearly do not disclose, teach or render obvious the subject matter of independent claims 1, 20, 29, 43 and 49.

Independent claims 1, 20, 29, 43 and 49 each recite, *inter alia*, a push-in wire connector having a movable member adapted to releasably retain an inserted wire and an activating member adapted to move the movable member to release the wire such that the inserted wire is quickly released from the push-in wire connector.

The Salestrom ‘841 patent discloses a modular lighting system 10, as shown in FIG. 3. A transformer 46 is provided power through wire 48 and supplies power through wire 52.

The transformer 46 has a male connector (plug) 44 and a female connector 50 that are connected to the transformer by the wires 48 and 52, respectively. The lighting module 18 has a male plug portion 22 from which connector elements 24 protrude at a first end and a corresponding female plug portion 26 at a second end, as shown in FIGS. 3 and 4. The male plug portion 22 of the lighting module is either plugged into the female connector 50 of the transformer or into a corresponding socket 28 of another lighting module 18. A plurality of lighting modules 18 are connected to one another in an end-to-end relationship by the male and corresponding female portions of each lighting module. A light harness 56 may be used to connect light modules 18 that are intended to be spaced apart.

The Gibilisco '668 patent is cited for disclosing an electrical connector 10 having a spring element 26 adapted to receive a wire 22, as shown in FIGS. 1 and 4. A movable member 38 of the spring element receives the inserted wire. A lever 56 flexes the movable member 38 of the spring element 26 such the inserted wire 22 can be removed.

The Hatch reference is cited for disclosing an electronic transformer.

As noted in the Office Action, the Salestrom '841 patent does not disclose a push-in wire connector having a movable member adapted to releasably retain an inserted wire and an activating member adapted to move the movable member to release the wire such that the inserted wire is quickly released from the push-in wire connector, as recited in independent claim 1. However, the Salestrom '841 patent is not modifiable as suggested in the Office Action to modify the connectors of the Salestrom '841 patent with the activating member/quick release connector of the Gibilisco '668 patent.

As stated in lines 13 – 16 of col. 1 of the Salestrom '841 patent, a principal object is “to provide a lighting system comprised of light modules which may be connected together in an end-to-end relationship.” Modifying the male and female plug portions 22 and 26 of the Salestrom '841 patent to have the activating member/quick release connector of the Gibilisco '668 patent would prevent the individual light modules 18 of the Salestrom '841 patent from being connected in an end-to-end relationship, thereby destroying a cited object of the Salestrom '841 patent. Rather than directly connecting the male and female plug portions of the light modules, wires are required to be connected between each light module. Thus, the simple one step connection between male and female ends of the light module would become a three step process in which wire must be provided, one end of the wire inserted into one end

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of a light module, and the other end of the wire inserted into an end of another light module. A rejection based upon a modification of a reference that destroys the intent and function of the invention disclosed in the reference is not proper. There is no technological motivation for engaging in the suggested modification, rather there is a disincentive to modify the Salestrom '841 patent with the Gibilisco '668 patent as suggested. In re Gordon, 733 F.2d 900, 221 USPQ 1125 (Fed. Cir. 1984).

Furthermore, all the connections between the various components of the lighting system 10 of the Salestrom '841 patent are plug and socket connections. The Salestrom '841 patent does not disclose or suggest a push-in wire connector having a movable member adapted to releasably retain an inserted wire and an activating member adapted to move the movable member to release the wire such that the inserted wire is quickly released from the push-in wire connector. Moreover, because the lighting system of the Salestrom '841 patent discloses plug and socket connections, the Salestrom '841 patent does not contemplate connecting a wire to any component of its lighting system. Thus, the Salestrom '841 patent actually teaches away from having wires connected to the individual light modules 10 with the activating member/quick release connectors of the Gibilisco '668 patent. Teaching away from the claimed invention is a per se demonstration of lack of prima facie obviousness as it is the antithesis of the reference suggesting that the person of ordinary skill go in the claimed direction. In re Hedges, 783 F.2d 1038, 228 USPQ 685 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

The cited Hatch non-patent literature does not cure the above-noted deficiency with regard to the Salestrom '841 patent not being modifiable with the activating member/quick release connector of the Gibilisco '668 patent.

Claims 2 – 6, 8 - 19, 21 – 28, 30 – 42, 44 - 48 and 50 - 56 being dependent upon independent claims 1, 20, 29, 43 and 49, respectively, are also allowable for the above reasons. Moreover, these dependent claims recite additional features further distinguishing them over the cited patents, such as the transformer having a mountable side adapted to mount the transformer to an object of claims 5, 22 and 54; a dimmer switch connected to the electrical power supply wire of claims 12 and 37; the movable member being selected from a group consisting of selected from the group consisting of a connector spring, a detent, a pressure plate, a leaf spring, an aperture defining capture teeth and combinations thereof of

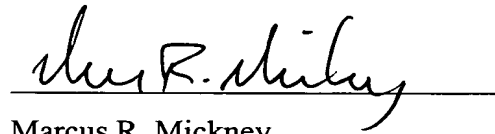
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claims 16 and 38; the activating member being a quick-release button of claim 17; and replacing the transformer with a higher rated transformer of claim 45. Therefore, dependent claims 2 – 6, 8 - 19, 21 – 28, 30 – 42, 44 - 48 and 50 – 56 are not anticipated or rendered obvious by the cited patents, particularly within the overall claimed combination.

* * *

In view of the foregoing amendments and comments, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1 – 6 and 8 - 56 are in condition for allowance. Prompt and favorable action is solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marcus R. Mickney", is written over a horizontal line.

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